

Parent Handbook

ChildKind

A Childcare Cooperative

National Institutes of Health
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Welcome to ChildKind!

ChildKind is a cooperative association whose members are the parents of children enrolled in the center. As members, parents are required to participate in activities and programs each month. See the Parent Participation section for more information on your responsibilities as a ChildKind member.

This Parent Handbook is one means of forming a partnership with you so that, together, we can create a warm, affectionate, trusting, challenging, learning environment for your child(ren).

ChildKind's Director and staff are committed to providing a professional, quality service that will foster the growth and development of your child.

ChildKind does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational admissions policies, scholarship programs, and other center administered programs.

ChildKind is a non-profit, tax exempt organization. ChildKind is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Philosophy

ChildKind is dedicated to providing quality, professional services to children, age two months to 36 months, and their families. ChildKind operates on the principle that infants and toddlers grow in learning environments that provide experiences aimed at fostering their development in five major areas:

- **Social/Emotional:** A warm, consistent and caring environment
- **Gross Motor:** Large muscle development and coordination
- **Fine Motor:** Small muscle development (puzzles, blocks, toys)
- **Language:** Communication and listening
- **Cognitive:** Problem solving and challenges for young minds

We encourage young children to develop at their own rates without pressure to perform beyond their developmental readiness. We make regular developmental assessments of children. The assessment results, daily observations and parent/family suggestions provide the foundation for developing individual activities for children.

Our staff provides affection and stimulating developmental activities. Throughout the day, your child will experience lots of cuddling, laughing, smiling and conversation. The Director and staff will be available to talk with you throughout the day. You are invited to call or visit anytime during the day. The staff will spend time talking to you at the beginning and end of your child's day or by appointment.

Governance

ChildKind is governed by a Board of Trustees of 11 voting members. The Board oversees the development of the center and its program and resolves any problems or concerns that may arise. At least six Trustees must be parents of children at the center, and at least 50% of the Board members must be NIH employees and other Federal government employees. Board members are elected at the October meeting of the Board of Trustees held at the

center. Officers include President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary and are chosen by the Board of Trustees at the October meeting. By laws are available on request.

ChildKind is regulated by the State of Maryland, Department of Human Resources, and is inspected once each year for relicensing. It is also in a limited agreement with the United States Government to operate on a government facility and must conform to regulations set forth by the NIH.

Hours of Operation and Holidays

The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, year round. Please drop your child off each day no later than 9:30 a.m. so that he or she can participate in planned activities. If your child will not be attending on a particular day, notify the staff by 9 a.m.

ChildKind is closed in observance of all federal holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Inauguration Day
- Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day (and the following Friday)
- Christmas Day

ChildKind closes whenever the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is closed and closes 1 hour after an early dismissal is called by the Federal Government. The center usually closes early on Christmas Eve, and when a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday the decision may be made to close early on the Monday before or the Friday after. ChildKind can also close for up to 2 additional days per year for professional training and staff development.

Late Pick Up Policy

It is the policy of ChildKind that the center closes promptly at 6 p.m. Children must be picked up and out of the center by that time. No grace period is allowed. If children are not out of the center by 6 p.m., late fees will be charged at the rate of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes of tardiness, or portion thereof. Penalties are due immediately upon assessment and should be paid to the senior staff member present in the child's classroom. This staff member is responsible for assessing late fees and will assign penalties based on the time shown on the time clock in the foyer of the center. In case of dispute, the Board of Trustees will serve as arbitrator.

ChildKind policy seeks to discourage chronic lateness in picking up children. To that end, after three incidents of tardiness in any calendar month, penalties for tardiness will be tripled for the duration of that month. After ten (10) incidents of tardiness in a fiscal year (October 1 – September 30), the staff director or the Board of Trustees may act to remove the offending

family from the program. In that event, the family will forfeit their deposit if the Director cannot immediately fill the opening

Emergency Closings Policy

If the Federal Government closes, ChildKind also will close. If the Federal Government imposes its Unscheduled Leave Policy (formerly called Liberal Leave Policy), ChildKind will open on time. If the Federal Government imposes a Delayed Opening Policy, ChildKind will open at 8:30 a.m. If NIH closes early due to inclement weather and an Adjusted Work Dismissal by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is announced, ChildKind will close one hour after the Federal Government is closed.

Emergency relocation plan

In the event of an emergency that requires the children to be relocated to a site other than building T-46, an emergency relocation plan will be implemented. This plan will facilitate the movement of the children and staff to a safe and secure location, on a temporary basis, until a parent or guardian can pick up their child. If such an unusual event should happen, a ChildKind phone tree will be used to inform parents of the situation. This phone tree will be updated periodically using information from the child's emergency contact cards located in the ChildKind kitchen, and therefore these cards should always reflect current contact information. Each parent should be certain to carry a copy of the phone tree with them at all times. Upon enrollment at ChildKind or in September of each year, a one-page summary will be distributed to parents outlining the key points of the Emergency relocation plan. The comprehensive document is available upon request from the ChildKind director.

Eligibility to enroll at ChildKind

Enrollment at ChildKind is limited to children of Federal Government employees. Priority is given to children in the following order: 1) The child(ren) of NIH employees; 2) The child(ren) of other Federal Government agencies who work at the NIH; 3) The child(ren) of other Federal Government employees. Children whose parent's employment status changes so they no longer fall into any of the above categories, may remain at the center up to 2 months from the status change before enrollment is terminated.

Enrollment Deposit

You are required to pay a refundable \$500 deposit upon your child's acceptance to ChildKind. Deposits are refundable when your child is withdrawn from the program, provided adequate notice is given (see Withdrawal Procedures) and parent participation requirements are met.

Withdrawal Procedures

To refund your deposit in full, proper notification must be given:

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1. In Rooms 1 and 2, your written notice of withdrawal must be submitted to the Director no later than 6 weeks prior to your child's last day at the center. For example, for a withdrawal occurring on May 30, the Director must be notified in writing by April 18.
 2. In Room 3, the Director must be notified in writing no less than 30 calendar days prior to the child's last day at the center.
 3. In Room 4, no written notice is required (only verbal) if the child remains at the center until the end of the next full 2 week tuition cycle in which the child has his/her third birthday. If the child leaves the center before this time, the Director must be notified in writing no less than 30 days prior to the child's last day at the center.

You must check with the Parent Participation Coordinator to be sure that all parent participation requirements have been met. You should do this at least 1 month before leaving the center to allow adequate time to complete your requirements.

Graduation from Room 4

Please remember that your child is eligible for enrollment at ChildKind, Inc. only up to the age of 3 years old. Because the ChildKind center is small, it is difficult to keep children moving through the classrooms according to their developmental progress if the children in Room 4 are not able to graduate and leave the center. The policy established by ChildKind's Board of Trustees is that eligibility for enrollment will extend until the end of the next full 2-week tuition cycle following the child's third birthday. Under extenuating circumstances, special consideration may be given at the director's discretion for a period of up to 4 weeks of additional enrollment (i.e., two tuition cycles). In the event that an enrollment extension is granted, a 30% increase in tuition rate will be charged.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that parents make multiple child-care arrangements well in advance of their child's third birthday to ensure that the child can move on from ChildKind during the month that he/she turns three.

Monthly Fees and Payment Procedures

The monthly tuition rate is decided by the Board of Trustees prior to the start of the fiscal year in October. ChildKind's fees are competitive with other child-care centers in the Washington area.

Tuition payment to cover a two-week period will be due every other Tuesday coinciding with NIH payday. This payment will cover the two-week period beginning the day before (i.e., the Monday before NIH payday). Regular payment is due when children are ill or on vacation. Checks should be made payable to ChildKind, Inc.

An additional materials fee is due each October 1, or when your child enters ChildKind (prorated on a monthly basis). The materials fee is used for field trips, parties, and other miscellaneous materials that are used for special occasions.

Tuition Schedules

ChildKind has two tuition rates – one for children less than or equal to two years old and the second rate for children older than two years. The tuition rate is set prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, and notice of any tuition increase will be provided to parents 60 days prior to the effective date. Tuition rates are based solely on the age of the child, regardless of which room the child is enrolled. The change in tuition rate is effective at the start of the pay period following the child's second birthday. The date your child is enrolled at ChildKind will determine the rate for the first pay period. The date your child leaves the center will determine the rate for the last pay period (provided that proper notice is given to the Director). The deposit cannot be credited toward the last period's tuition payment.

Delinquent Tuition

A late fee of \$5 **per day** will be charged if tuition is not paid by Friday of the week that the tuition payment is due. Charges will accrue starting the following Monday. In addition, **after 5 days** past the tuition due date, the Director will notify the delinquent parents in writing that tuition is due and that failure to pay the past due tuition can result in expulsion of the child from the center. Any parent delinquent in tuition payments for a period of **10** days or greater will be reported to the Board of Trustees. Parents must stay completely up to date in the tuition payments. Failure to do so will result in expulsion of the child from ChildKind **and subsequent legal action.**

Parents may petition the Director for an extension of tuition payment if there are extenuating circumstances. **A written petition should be submitted to the ChildKind Director within the first 5 days prior to the tuition due date explaining the situation and requesting an extension of the payment due date. Granting of the extension is at the sole discretion of the Director and petitioning the Director does not guarantee such extension.** Under some circumstances the Director may decide to consult with the Board of Trustees before making a final decision.

Parent Participation

One of the nicest things you can do for your child while he/she is at ChildKind is to get involved. ChildKind was established as a co-op where parents participate with the staff in enriching the lives of their children. This can be done in many ways. If you have any questions please talk to the Director or the Parent Participation Coordinator.

ChildKind must have a Board of Trustees and officers to function. The officers include President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Board carries out several significant functions that are vital to the center, but outside of the Director's purview. Chief among these is serving as a liaison with NIH. Other examples are budgeting, fundraising, and improving staff compensation. Because these decisions bear directly on the quality of the children's care, it is important that they not be concentrated in a few hands. Please consider becoming involved with the Board, either formally as a member, or on a project-by-project basis. One of the advantages of such a small organization is that the fruits of your labor are immediate.

Tasks

We need parents to perform a variety of tasks including:

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- Assisting the treasurer with the center's accounting and bookkeeping
 - Making play dough
 - Recycling for the center
 - Grocery shopping for the center
 - Caring for the children when there are staff meetings
 - Attending board meetings and /or serving on the board
 - Attending field trips
 - Cooking for the center
 - Organizing and/or conducting cultural events
 - Photocopying materials
 - Cleaning up the center (weekends for double hours)
 - Fund raising
 - Making music tapes

Parents are encouraged to attend board meetings and the Annual Parent Meeting/Back-to-School Night held in the fall. Attendance at these meetings will ensure that your views are heard and represented. The Board of Trustees and officers are elected at the October board meeting.

Classroom assistance is often needed during nap time (1:00 to 3:00 p.m.) while the staff attend staff meetings, training sessions, etc. The staff welcomes your help with typing, filing, copying or assisting them with special projects in the classroom.

Occasionally on a Saturday morning, ChildKind has a cleanup day. Everyone is encouraged to attend and each parent who attends will receive double credit for hours spent (i.e., if 2 hours are spent, 4 parent participation hours will be credited).

ChildKind also has a recycling program. Parents receive volunteer hours for taking home the recycling box each week.

You also will receive credit for helping to organize or run a variety of fund-raising projects. Time will be credited for actively soliciting during fund-raisers as well.

If you have special talents that could be helpful to ChildKind, please let the Director or Board of Trustees know. We look forward to your participation in ChildKind's many activities.

Parent Participation Guidelines and Procedures

1. All full-time enrolled families are required to contribute 3 hours per month. All part-time enrolled families are required to contribute 1.5 hours per month. The first month you are in the center you are not required to contribute parent participation hours.
2. All families are required each year to participate in 3 center cleanups or 3 babysitting sessions or a combination of both.
3. A task folder has been set up outside of the Director's office in the hallway and outside each classroom. This folder contains items that the center needs to have done. You simply take one of the task sheets, complete the work, and sign off on the log. You may also ask your teachers or the Director what they need to have done for the classrooms and/or the center.
4. A statement of hours contributed will be posted. Letters are sent to parents who are more than 6 hours behind in their participation requirements.

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- a) \$25 per hour (\$75 per month) not contributed will be charged.
 - b) Payment for owed hours is due within 15 days of statement.
 - c) All extra hours are carried over.
 - d) Credit for volunteer hours is given for services requested or approved by the center staff, Director or Board.
 - e) There is no automatic exemption of volunteer hours for Board members. If a meeting is missed, Board member families are expected to contribute hours through other means.

Policy Concerning Delinquent Parent Participation Hours

Parents with greater than 6 delinquent parent participation hours at the close of a quarter will be fined \$25.00 per hour, with the payment of the fine or make-up of the parent participation hours due by the close of the next quarter. The quarters end on the last day of December, March, June and September.

Parents who fail to make up their parent participation hours or pay the fine will be given a date of termination of their child's enrollment at ChildKind. The fine will be taken out of the deposit.

Parents may petition the Board of Trustees for an exemption due to unusual circumstances that prevent completion of their parent participation responsibilities. In addition, upon demonstration of an acceptable effort to meet their obligations, the Parent Participation Coordinator may grant one additional quarter to make up the delinquent hours.

Parent Participation Recording

After contributing time to the center, fill out a Parent Participation Form. The forms are available outside the Director's office.

Procedure to request balance carry-over

Parents with an excess of participation hours upon withdrawing their child from Childkind are eligible to request from the Childkind Board of Directors to have their remaining balance of participation hours held and applied toward the parent participation obligation for a sibling entering Childkind. The request should be submitted to the Board in writing. The Board will decide each case on an individual basis. In addition, the Board reserves the right to set a maximum number of hours that can be carried over. If the request is granted, the balance of hours will be reduced by three hours per month from the time of withdrawal of one child until the time of entry of the subsequent sibling. The Board reserves the right to deny any request.

Health Policy

Prevention of illness and maintaining the good health of all enrolled children are the primary goals of the ChildKind health policy. To this end, a child who cannot participate comfortably in the center's activities, whose behavior has changed noticeably, or whose illness requires

the staff to provide greater care than the required teacher-child ratio, thereby compromising the health of other children, will be excluded from the center.

Additionally, the Director, in consultation with the Board President (or Co-Presidents), may exclude symptomatic children from the center may be determined by the Director, in during a potential outbreak of an illness with epidemic consequences. Parent, legal guardian or other person designated by the parent, will be notified immediately when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion. A child with any serious illness requiring an absence from the center for more than four days must be accompanied by a doctor's note upon their return.

The following conditions warrant temporary exclusion from the center:

- **Fever.** In children under 4 months, an auxiliary temperature of 100 or more warrants exclusion until the child is afebrile. In children over 4 months, an oral temperature of 101 or an auxiliary temperature over 100 accompanied by behavioral changes requires exclusion until the child is afebrile and behavior is normal. Fevers over 100 accompanied by other symptoms of bacterial or viral disease (e.g., upper respiratory symptoms including mild cough and runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) require exclusion until the child remains afebrile for a 24 hour period. The child may return sooner if found to be non-contagious by his/her health care provider as documented in a note.
- **Diarrhea.** Three consecutive very loose or watery stools either at the center or at home require exclusion for 24 hours. One bloody loose stool warrants exclusion and evaluation by a health care provider. Children who develop diarrhea due to *Salmonella typhi*, *Shigella*, or *E.coli* 0157:H7 require negative stool cultures prior to returning to the center.
- **Vomiting.** Two or more episodes of vomiting either at the center or at home require exclusion for 24 hours or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable and the child not in danger of dehydration.
- **Mouth sores** with drooling warrants exclusion until resolved unless a health care provider determines the condition to be non-infectious.
 - Hand, Foot and Mouth disease requires exclusion until rash and mouth sores resolve.
 - Herpetic gingivostomatitis requires exclusion until condition has resolved if it is a primary infection (child's first infection) or the child does not have control of their oral secretions. Recurrent cold sores, with control of oral secretions, do not require exclusion.
- **Rashes** of sudden onset with or without fever that have never been evident before need to be identified by your child's doctor and documented for our files. A sudden rash requires exclusion until condition resolves unless a health care provider determines the condition to be non-infectious.
 - Children with impetigo may return 24 hours after initiation of treatment.
 - Children with chicken pox may return after sores have dried and crusted over and there are no new sores appearing.
 - Children with measles or rubella may return 6 days after onset of rash.

Rashes not associated with fever or behavioral changes do not require exclusion, such as contact dermatitis and allergic reactions.

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- **Conjunctivitis.** Severe pink or red eyes or purulent eyes (pus-filled) need to be checked by your child's doctor and a statement of the doctor's findings is required before returning to daycare. If a child is being treated for conjunctivitis they need to be on medication for at least 24 hours and show signs of improvement (no pus and less redness) before returning.
 - **Scabies, head lice, or other infestation** requires exclusion until after successful treatment and removal of all nits.
 - **Tuberculosis** requires exclusion until a health care provider determines the child to be non-infectious.
 - **Strep throat or other streptococcal illness** requires exclusion until 24 hours after onset of treatment.
 - Children with **pertussis** warrant exclusion until they have completed 5 days of antibiotic treatment.
 - **Mumps** requires exclusion until 9 days after the start of gland swelling.
 - Children with **Hepatitis A** require exclusion until 1 week after onset of illness.
 - Any child with **stiff neck, lethargy, irritability, or persistent crying** (possible meningitis) will be excluded until physician evaluation.
 - **Doctor's Notes.** A note is required by your child's doctor if they have been sick and out for more than 3 days. The note should state the diagnosis, treatment, and a recommendation of when they can return to the center.
 - **Medications.** The staff should be made aware of any medication, including over-the-counter medication that is being administered at home. Lack of such notification almost cost the life of a child at the center.

A few other health-related reminders:

1. Please call the center by 9 a.m. if your child will not be attending due to an illness.
2. If the staff feels that your child is ill or contagious, the child will not be allowed to attend that day.
3. You are responsible for picking up your sick child within 1 hour of being notified of illness. Failure to do this is unfair to your child, the other children, and the affected teachers who must be diverted from their primary tasks. If parents fail to do this on 2 occasions the family may be asked to leave the center by the director. This decision can be appealed to the Board.
4. Please notify the center if your child or a family member is diagnosed as having a communicable disease. The Director will contact you if your child has been exposed to such a disease.
5. If your child is ill while you are away, it is helpful for staff to know the nature of the illness and any other relevant information.
6. If a physician has prescribed any medication for your child that (s)he has never taken before, (s)he must be on the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.

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7. Be sure your child's immunization record at the center is kept up to date. This involves reporting each immunization to the Director (forms are available in the center).
 8. Please remember that although symptoms may subside, your child may not be ready to return to his or her daily routine. It has been our experience that children who return to ChildKind before they are completely well are unable to participate fully in the day's activities, often suffer a relapse, and can infect other children. In fairness to both your child and the other children in the center, it is important that you allow your child to recover completely before returning to the center.
 9. If your child is not behaving like his/her everyday self (e.g. whiny, fussy, not exhibiting regular eating or sleeping patterns) even though they are not symptomatic (fever etc.) the staff is obliged to call and let you know. It is up to parents to decide if they choose to visit the center to check out their child and/or take them home.

Emergency Procedures

In the event that a child has an illness or injury that cannot be handled by routine first aid at ChildKind, the procedures obtaining qualified assistance are:

1. Staff will call 911 for all emergency situations such as breathing trouble, unconsciousness, anaphylactic shock or uncertain conditions.
2. Staff will call the parent(s) or person(s) on the Emergency Notification Card, maintained at the center, if parents cannot be reached.
3. Although ChildKind has a car seat on the premises, it is not to be used for transporting an ill or injured child to the hospital in a personal car. It is to be used for non-health related emergencies, such as unexpected situations where a friend or relative is picking up your child. If a child needs to be transported to the hospital, it will be done by ambulance.

Medications

We will administer medications **ONLY** after you have submitted a Medication Order Form signed by the child's physician or the pharmacy label for the medication with all pertinent information. The form or label must include the child's name, physician's name, medication name, current date, length of time medication is to be administered, amount to give, and the frequency. A parent's signature authorizing the center to administer the medication is also required on the Medication Order Form. Please also provide to the teachers the time of day the medication should be given and the possible side effects. In addition to providing this written information, please take time to discuss this information with the staff before you leave your child at the center. These requirements apply to all medication, including over-the-counter medications such as pain relievers and cough syrup. In the cases of Tylenol and Orajel, staff will administer only the first dose, after which a note is required.

When bringing liquid medications for your child, please supply a medicine dropper or an appropriate measuring spoon. The center does not supply these.

Because of possible skin reactions to sunscreens, you must have a note from the health care provider in order for the staff to apply sunscreen in Room 1. In Rooms 2, 3, and 4, a parent must complete and sign a Medication Order (a doctor's signature is not required for these rooms). This note is good for your entire stay at ChildKind.

References

American Public Health Association/American Academy of Pediatrics: Caring for our children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. Washington, D.C., American Public Health Association. 1992

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Wald ER. "Infections in Day Care Environments" in Pediatric Infectious Diseases. Ed. Jenson and Baltimore. Appleton and Lange. Norwalk, CT. 1995.

Biting Policy

Philosophy

Biting can be a normal part of development and is not a sign of a bad child or bad parents. However, biting is not an acceptable behavior and corrective actions will be taken immediately to stop this behavior.

Treatment of Bitten Child

When a biting incident occurs, the child is immediately comforted. Then first aid is initiated. First aid includes washing the area with soap and water even if there is no evidence of skin breakage. If there is a puncture wound, the parents will be notified immediately as a visit to the pediatrician is recommended. In the rare case of severe laceration or other damage, emergency medical personnel will be contacted.

An incident report will be generated for the child and the center.

Parents will have an opportunity to have a formal conference with the Director and the teachers to discuss the problem.

In the event that a bite is not detected by the staff, the parent may be the first to notice bite marks. Parents should notify the Director and the teachers of the injury as soon as possible. An incident report will be generated with the parent's assistance.

Treatment of Biter

The child is removed from the vicinity of the bitten child and, if necessary, physically controlled until the child is capable of self control. The teacher will discuss how biting is wrong and how it feels to be bitten. Parents will be notified each time their child bites.

With repeat occurrences, a formal conference will be held with the teachers, parents, and the Director to outline strategies to combat the biting behavior at ChildKind and at home. If the problem behavior continues, parents are requested to consult a pediatrician or behavioral specialist. If the problem behavior continues and the parents do not cooperate with the center's efforts, the child will be removed from the center for the safety of the other children for a period of time determined by the Director.

What You Should Bring to ChildKind

A list of items that you should bring to ChildKind is presented below.

IMPORTANT: Please label everything you bring to the center: bottles, including caps, rings and discs; food containers; eating utensils; medications and ointments; pacifiers; and clothing, including boots, coats, hats and mittens.

Food

1. Formula or breast milk - enough for an entire day of feedings. Please bring one prepared bottle for each feeding.
2. Solid foods (jars) if your child is not completely on table foods.
3. A ready-to-serve lunch. We cannot heat food, but you can send soup, etc., in a thermos. We provide morning and afternoon snacks as well as beverages and milk for snacks.
4. Breakfast is not provided. However, you may bring ready-to-eat breakfast food. Breakfast ends at 8:30 a.m.

Diapers and Wipes

Cloth or disposable diapers are acceptable. If using disposables, please bring a large supply; you will be notified when your child's supply is low. For cloth, please bring a plastic bag each day for storage of wet and soiled diapers.

You are also responsible for bringing wipes.

Ointments

At your request, we will apply over-the-counter topical ointments for rashes, teething pain, etc. Examples are Desitin, A&D, Balmex and Orajel. For prescription ointments, see the Medications section of this manual.

Clothing

Bring at least one change of clothing (labeled with the child's name) per day. In some cases, the staff wash soiled clothing. If you prefer that they not launder your child's clothes, please make a point of discussing this with the teachers in your child's room. A bib must be left at the center to help protect your child's clothing during meals and snacks.

Sign-In Policy and Four-Step Safety Check

When you drop off and pick up your child at ChildKind, please be sure to sign in and out on the sign-in sheet posted outside of your child's room. These sign-in sheets are used to perform a four-step safety check whenever the children leave the building (i.e., to the playground, for a walk, etc.). The safety check procedure is as follows:

1. A head count is performed using the attendance sheets before leaving the classroom.
2. A head count is performed using the attendance sheet upon arrival at the destination (playground, etc.).

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3. A head count is performed before leaving the destination.
 4. A head count is repeated upon return to the classroom.

Feeding Schedule

Your infant will be fed on demand or according to the schedule you discuss with the staff and/or write on the daily report form. Older toddlers will eat snacks and lunch together each day.

Nap Schedule

Your infant will be put down for naps on demand or according to the schedule you have discussed with the staff. If we find that your child's nap schedule needs to be altered, we will discuss this with you and decide together what should be done. Older toddlers will nap together after lunch each day.

"No Shoe" Policy for Rooms 1 and 2

Because the younger children crawl on the carpet in Rooms 1 and 2, ChildKind has established a policy that no street shoes be worn by parents or staff in those rooms. When you bring your child in each day, please take your shoes off so that we can keep our carpeted areas as safe as possible. If you have questions, please ask a staff member.

Communications

Each child has a chart in his or her cubby. This is a way for you and the staff to make notes about your child's progress, problems or concerns. Because the staff changes during the day, it is important that you write down specific instructions about your child to ensure communication throughout the day. Please do not leave your child or pick up your child without making sure that a staff member is present and aware of your child's status.

At the end of each day, please take time to review staff comments.

Bulletin boards are located in the front vestibule and in each classroom. Please check them regularly for notices and activities.

The ChildKind Newsletter is published regularly. If you have news you would like to share with other ChildKind parents, please contact a member of the staff, the Director or the Board President.

A roster of staff and children is also published regularly and distributed to all ChildKind families.

All parents are invited to attend open Board meetings, which are held the second Tuesday of each month from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at the center.

Grievance Protocol for Parents

Communication is one of the key ingredients to successful operation of the center. It is vital that all involved (parents, Director, and staff) are aware of and adhere to the following protocol to enable the center to function efficiently.

1. If parents have concerns regarding their child's classroom, they should be addressed directly with the staff in that classroom. If the concerns are related to the staff, they should still be addressed with the individual staff members.
2. If you feel that your concerns have not been answered to your satisfaction, you should then go to the Director of the center.
3. If, after speaking with the Director, your issues of concern still have not been resolved, you may then contact the current President (or Co-Presidents) of the Board of Trustees.
4. After the President (or Co-Presidents) has verified your contact with the staff and the Director, she/he will meet with all concerned to hear all sides of the issue and work to help resolve the situation.
5. If, after this time, you are not yet satisfied, you will be given the opportunity to address the entire Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.
6. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome after following the above procedures, you may contact the NIH Child Care Program Specialist, WEPB, DSS, ORS on (301) 402-8180 to discuss your situation and receive consultation. The NIH Child Care Program Specialist does not have the authority to overrule a judgment decision made by the Board of Directors/Trustees, however they can offer their assistance to the Board in identifying alternate resolution tactics for future similar issues should they arise.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held periodically in each classroom. These conferences are scheduled after a child has been in his/her room for 6 months. At this time the staff will have the opportunity to share the observations, assessments and records they have compiled on each child. It is an opportunity for both parents and staff to share the progress the child has made in all the major areas of development. It is also a time where the staff can offer suggestions of ways for parents to work with their children at home to reinforce and enhance the activities at the center. Through conferences, parents are able to see how the staff plans are based totally on the needs and interests of the group as a whole and the individual children as well. It is also a good time for parents to share with the staff, giving them insight as to what the child does at home, etc.

The teacher will be in touch with the parents in order to schedule the conference at a convenient time for all parties. It is most convenient for staff to meet during their schedule planning time (1:30 to 3:00 p.m.) so that they do not need to be out of the classroom while the children are up and about.

Parents are encouraged to keep in close contact with the staff and to meet with them as frequently as they feel necessary, in addition to their scheduled conferences.

Transitions (from one room or age group to next)

The decision to move a child from one age group to the next is based on observations and assessments made by the staff. The Director notifies the parents in writing of the staff's decision with a detailed explanation for that decision. A week will be set for the child to visit the next room, which will precede the actual move.

The visiting week will be based on a schedule, which will be presented to the parents. This schedule is a flexible one, in accordance with the needs of the individual child involved. Each day the visit will be longer, and by the fifth day, the child will spend the entire day in the new room. Some children may or may not need the whole week. Others may need more than a week.

Parents are encouraged to meet with the "new" staff to get a sense of scheduling philosophy, etc., and also some written information, regarding necessities, etc.

The teachers from both rooms, (current and new), will also meet to learn as much as they can about their newest arrival.

There will be a formal conference between the parents and the teachers in the old room shortly before the child moves to the next room so the staff will have the opportunity to show you the progress he/she has made to enable him/her to be ready for the next room.

Parents are encouraged to speak with the staff or the Director at any time.

Children with Special Needs

ChildKind welcomes the opportunity to serve children and families with special needs.

After the family has shared the child's history and requirements with the Director, the Director reviews the case with the staff who would be working directly with that child. It is always in the best interest and needs of the child that a decision is made as to whether or not we can fully accommodate the child and his/her family.

As a result of the low child/staff ratio and high quality caliber of our staff, it is rare that we are unable to work with a child. The low ratio makes it possible for a staff member to devote that little extra time and effort without affecting the appropriate care of the others and at the same time including the child in the program.

Once a child is enrolled, the parents meet with the staff to share the child's background and specifics. Physicians or any other professionals who have been involved in the child's care are welcome to share their history with the child with the staff. The staff then proceeds to develop a strategy to help the child comfortably adjust to the program, giving him/her the opportunity to do what the others are doing, but in his or her own "unique" way or at his/her own level of development. If medications need to be administered regularly, all staff are made aware and are prepared to do so.

The teachers will plan for this child both independently with the use of a special form, an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) form, and as part of their regular weekly curriculum plans.

The Board of Trustees and staff hope the information provided in this handbook answers your questions concerning ChildKind's program.

**Please feel free to contact the Director at any time with further questions.
(301) 496-8357**